

Songwriter created "City of New Orleans," "Go Cubs Go," devoted life to Chicago, music

WASHINGTON – Today, a bill introduced by Congressman Mike Quigley (D-IL) to name a Chicago post office for the late songwriter Steve Goodman passed in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill now moves to the Senate for consideration.

Quigley's effort to memorialize and celebrate Goodman's life at the Lakeview Post Office, located at 1343 W. Irving Park Road, has the full support of the Illinois Congressional delegation, the Old Town School of Folk Music, and a growing list of local and nationally known recording artists.

In advance of this evening's vote, Quigley delivered the following remarks on the House floor:

"I rise today in support of H.R. 4861, a resolution to name the Post Office at 1343 West Irving Park Road after Steve Goodman.

Steve Goodman was a true Chicagoan, a legendary folk singer and songwriter, and a faithful Cubs fan.

Sadly, Goodman succumbed to leukemia in 1984 at the young age of 36 after a courageous 15-year battle with the disease.

Over the course of his illness, Goodman wrote some of the most enduring American folk songs, including “The City of New Orleans,” for which he won one of his two Grammy awards, and the great Chicago tune “Lincoln Park Pirates.”

Goodman’s career was inexorably intertwined with Chicago’s Old Town School of Folk Music, where he learned his craft and befriended folk music luminaries such as Roger McGuinn of The Byrds, Bob Gibson, Bonnie Koloc, and John Prine.

While older Goodman fans are no doubt aware of his connection to the Cubs, best exemplified by his song “A Dying Cubs Fan’s Last Request,” in recent years younger generations have come to know Steve Goodman as the writer and performer of “Go, Cubs, Go,” the anthem played at Wrigley Field following Cubs’ wins.

Steve's spirit lives on after every Cubs home win, as thousands of fans happily head home from Wrigley singing, "Go, Cubs, Go..."

With the passage of this legislation, it's possible that the strains of this happy tune will be heard on the steps of the Steve Goodman Post Office, not a mile up Clark Street from Wrigley Field.

Naming the Post Office at 1343 West Irving Park Road after Steve Goodman is a small but fitting way to honor the life and work of a man whose music was always imbued with emotions and scenes of everyday life.

I urge the swift passage of this legislation."

Quigley's resolution now moves to the Senate for consideration. Once the measure is approved, Quigley is planning a "musical" unveiling event at the post office for the community this summer, in collaboration with the Old Town School of Folk Music. More details will be made available as plans progress.

Steve Goodman Biography

Steve Goodman is perhaps best known by Chicagoans and Cubs fans as the writer and performer of “Go Cubs Go”, the song that plays at Wrigley Field following Cubs’ wins. But while this song may bring him notoriety, Steve Goodman’s life was an inspiration for many other reasons. Be it the courage and perseverance that characterized his 15-year battle with leukemia, his celebrated contributions to American folk music, or the general enthusiasm and good humor with which he approached life, Steve Goodman was a great Chicagoan by all accounts.

Goodman’s career in folk music featured both exemplary writing and performance. Besides his Cubs-related music, Goodman released 10 albums of folk music and five albums of his work have been released posthumously. He received two Grammy Awards, both posthumously, for his writing of the hit “City of New Orleans” and his album *Unfinished Business*. In fact, “City of New Orleans” was a top-20 hit for Arlo Guthrie in 1972, and a number one country music hit for Willie Nelson in 1985, the year that Goodman won his first Grammy.

Goodman's singing career was centered largely around the folk music clubs of Chicago, and Goodman wrote and performed many classic songs about the city, including two well known songs about the Chicago Cubs – "The Dying Cub Fan's Last Request" and "Go, Cubs, Go." Other great Chicago-related songs of Goodman’s include “The Lincoln Park Pirates,” about the notorious Lincoln Towing Company, and “Daley’s Gone,” eulogizing the late Mayor Richard J. Daley.

The Old Town School of Folk Music played a major role in Goodman's music career. He studied at the School in the 1960s with folk music luminaries such as Roger McGuinn of the Byrds, Bob Gibson, Bonnie Koloc, and his good friend John Prine. Along with these artists, Goodman helped build the School's reputation as home to many of folk music's greatest writers and performers.

Most remarkable, however, is that Goodman crafted such an illustrious music career while battling leukemia for 15 years until his death at age 36. He endured his fight with courage and good humor – it's said that he nicknamed himself "Cool Hand Leuk" – and tragically died in 1984 just eleven days before his beloved Cubs played their first playoff game at Wrigley Field since 1945. Goodman had been asked to sing the "Star Spangled Banner" before that game, but Jimmy Buffett filled in and dedicated it to his friend. Goodman's ashes were later spread at Wrigley Field, and his memory lives on every time the Cubs win a home game and thousands happily sing along to "Go Cubs Go."